

PRIZE ESSAY

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, SAN FRANCISCO

HOW WE MAY
DISPOSE OF
OUR.....

SURPLUS PRODUCTS

... AND ...

HOW WE MAY
EMPLOY OUR..

SURPLUS LABOR

J. ALFRED KINGHORN-JONES

Can be obtained of J. Alfred Kinghorn-Jones, room 48, 22½ Geary Street,
San Francisco, between the hours of 8:30 & 9:15; 12 & 1; 3 & 4; or by mail

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SEVEN STRAWES WHICH SHOWYTH YE WAY OF YE WINDE

ONE.

San Francisco, Jan. 6, 1898.

To the Trustees of Mechanics' Institute:—

Gentlemen: Referring to your letter of the 5th inst., awarding me the prize for the best Essay on "How We May Dispose of Our Surplus Products and How We May Employ Our Surplus Labor," will you kindly inform me if you intend to publish it; and if so, may I be allowed to correct proof? If you will not publish the Essay, may I have the MS. to do so? There is certainly no more important question before the world than the one you propounded; for the increasing number of the disemployed (disallowed to work), and the constantly diminishing wage, as a natural consequence, of those employed, is a fearful menace to the peace and happiness of humanity, which includes all the divisions into which scientists have been pleased to divide us.

If you refuse to publish the paper for which you offered a prize, may I ask if the intention was merely that of school exercise for the competitors, committee, judge, etc., and not from any real desire to offer the plan selected for the consideration of those who take an interest in social conditions?

As this said prize was offered for MS. sent you in August, and awarded me November 2d, and then, for some reason, inscrutable to those uninitiated in the mysteries of your management, re-committed for reconsideration for a period of nine weeks, or a

sufficient time, according to present average, for about one hundred deaths to occur in this city from starvation, murder, or suicide, caused by the want of honest employment, it appears to me that your conduct is on a line with that of the parsons with regard to your attitude toward Labor. I do not think of any better illustration to show my meaning than that of a cat with a mouse—first deprive it of freedom, frighten it, then maim it, and play with it, and then take its life!

I have no desire to be unnecessarily harsh, but I do desire to be emphatic in my denunciation of the Labor-crushing church and other law-ridden institutions.

I am, gentlemen, your faithful

J. ALFRED KINGHORN-JONES.

P. S.—The medal is received, and I am very sorry not to be able to compliment you on the workmanship; it is struck from an old die, so dilapidated that the “M” in Mechanics is barely legible. In the word “mechanics” there is an apostrophe over “c” and another over “s.” The relief of the whole is so poor that it has a worthless appearance. The engraving also is most unsymmetrical; a clever engraver would have put the whole title of the Essay on the medal with ease.

TWO.

Sunday, Feb. 13, 1898.

To the Trustees of Mechanics' Institute:—

Dear Sirs: I wrote you January 6th, asking if you would, or I might, publish the Prize Essay. Not having a reply appears strange to one brought up in the old-fashioned belief that gentlemen always answer letters.

Failing your reply on or before the 17th inst., I shall publish the article, and return you the parody

of a medal in the lady's watch case (three sizes too large) in which I received it.

Shreve & Company, who know so well how to turn out prizes for horse racers, and Divine-image smashers, with glove-like fitting cases, failed to realize that no one with refined feelings could appreciate such an abortion as the metal bearing the legend, "For Prize Essay," which might mean on a Tom Cat or a She Elephant, or any other subject one would not feel proud of wasting time for dissertation.

Various incidents in this matter confirm the fact, patent to every observant thinker, that 1898 years of the Christianity invented, taught, and maintained by barons and priests, has succeeded most effectually in robbing the poor of all rights, even the right to live. The time has come when Labor must see that it is "the law worketh wrath, for where no law is, there is no transgression." Labor must assert, regain, and maintain its rights; refuse to submit to any man-made-law, or forever give up the fight—no half-measures will avail now.

I am, dear sirs, your faithful

J. ALFRED KINGHORN-JONES.

THREE.

Virginia and LeRoy, Berkeley, Cal.,
17 Feb., 1898.

The Trustees of Mechanics' Institute:—

Dear Sirs: Yours of the 16th at hand, in which the Secretary intimates very clearly that you (the Trustees) have no time to devote to such a matter as the "Employment of Surplus Labor," all your time and energy being concentrated on the Gold Mining Fair. You must be proud of the standard you are working so vigorously to maintain and extend; its effects have

been well illustrated by the dozen deaths of children and the quarter of a dozen charming young women sacrificed by the opening parade; the wedding one day and divorce the next follows on as a striking example of the degrading effect of the present money system.

I herewith return the article presented to me as a medal. Keep it as a specimen of art in San Francisco in the year of the Golden Jubilee—when the greatest curse the world has ever known was exalted far above the Deity.

Your faithful

J. ALFRED KINGHORN-JONES.

FOUR.

(From "Free Society," San Francisco, Jan 16, 1898.)

OPEN LETTER

To Thomas Garrett, City Editor of "The Examiner,"
San Francisco.

Dear Sir: Yours of December 23 to hand, in which you reply to my request that you would publish the essay on "How We May Dispose of Our Surplus Products, and How We May Employ Our Surplus Labor," by saying: "I am sorry to say that, owing to lack of space, the Examiner will not be able to publish your paper."

How to employ our surplus Labor is the most important question before the world, both to the employed and disemployed, the rapidly increasing number of the latter being a menace to the peace and happiness of all humanity.

In my letter to you it was stated that the Mechanics' Institute had awarded the prize for the Essay you were asked to publish and that it was only 2,500 words.

Your reply, therefore, speaks volumes, taken in connection with the fact that the Examiner prints 25,000 or 250,000 words on such inhuman matters as a prize fight, or Durrant, and can also find space for glowing accounts of such deceptive schemes as Booth's Salvation Colony, by which poor dupes are induced to grow beets for a millionaire under the delusive hope, encouraged by the Mayor, that they are actually going to work for themselves. Those people who continually advise the poor to be content with the position in which God has placed them, have no desire whatever to settle the Labor question—or how would they get a living—they would have to do some real useful work or starve—a most important decision for them to make!

I would commend to your notice "Confessions of a New York Journalist," lately published; in case you have not seen it, the following extract may be interesting:

"There is no such thing as an independent daily press. We are all slaves! You know it and I know it. There is not one of you that dare express an honest opinion. I am paid \$150 per week for keeping honest opinions out of the paper I am connected with. The man who would be so foolish as to write honest opinions would soon be out on the street hunting for another job. The business of a journalist is to distort the truth; to lie outright; to pervert; to vilify; to fawn at the feet of mammon and to sell his country and his race for his daily bread. We are the tools and vassals of rich men behind the scenes. We are intellectual prostitutes, and our time, our talents and our possibilities are all the property of other men."

Many thanks for your reply. Faithfully,

J. ALFRED KINGHORN-JONES.

San Francisco, Jan. 4, '98.

FIVE.

"The Chronicle" did not consider it a suitable subject for its columns.

SIX.

"The Bulletin" had no space for it.

SEVEN.

"The Call" (which "speaks for all"—at least, this is their joker) would not even reply to either of two requests to publish a poor man's idea on how to employ surplus Labor, which had been awarded the prize by the first Literary Society in the city.

Ergo, the poor man who has to work for two land-barons in addition to working for the city vampires, before the *law* allows him to work for his family, has to take the risk of publishing, if he desires to bring the subject before the people.

Which he does.

HOW WE MAY DISPOSE OF OUR SURPLUS PRODUCTS, AND HOW WE MAY EM- PLOY OUR SURPLUS LABOR.

[The Mechanics' Institute of San Francisco offered the prize of a silver medal for the best Essay on the above subject, and awarded it for the following, written by J. Alfred Kinghorn-Jones:]

Because 5,000,000 are disemployed (disallowed to work) in America, they are prevented from disposing or consuming what is so often termed surplus products. How can there be overproduction in a land where millions are on the verge of starvation, clothed in rags or patches and homeless? It therefore appears that the second question, answered satisfactorily, would also be a full reply to the first question.

The questions reveal an unnatural state of things brought about by unnatural laws; the vast area of this glorious land would provide one hundred and sixty-four acres to each family; the wealth created by land values is estimated at \$32,000,000,000; this would provide each family with \$5,000; the land and the wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few thousands only of the 70,000,000; these few have the power of disemploying and disinheriting the millions; the few very wealthy are being contracted with fearful rapidity into still fewer, with an ever increasing amount of wealth. This must consequently increase the number of the disemployed with a similar fearful rapidity.

One thing only allows the possibility of such unnatural conditions, and that is the unnatural medium of exchange.

Gold, the most useless of metals, is hidden away in those parts of the earth that are the least suitable for the habitation of man. This is most forcibly illustrated at the present time by the Klondike. Labor produces it at great risk of life.

Labor refines it.

Labor then stamps it with certain hieroglyphics, which gives it a villainous fictitious value.

Labor, the creator, is actually the idiot who makes the created inanimate metal into the master, tyrant, autocrat over its creator!

A magnet, by natural law, draws all the steel filings to itself that are within the range of its influence, but having done so, it has not increased its power to draw more from a still greater distance; it has, in fact, satiated its power of attraction.

Gold, by an unnatural, inhuman law, is given the power of interest, which allows it to draw other gold to itself, and with each addition to add, in an ever-increasing ratio, the power to draw still more to itself, so that the greatest pile must logically draw all the bullion and coined gold into the possession of one combine, or trust, or individual; in fact, this consummation is now within measurable distance.

Natural law is that every one should labor to the best of their ability for the good of themselves without injury to others, and consequently for the good of humanity.

Unnatural usury laws allow the few to live on the labor of others.

To-day the decalogue is a dead letter, totally ignored since the crime of 1873, which established the unanalogue,* THOU SHALT PAY IN GOLD.

The table of statistics shows that the average amount of wealth produced per day is \$10 for each worker, but as their average pay is about \$1 per day, they are robbed of about \$9 per day. This ac-

*New word; coined by the author.

counts for the underconsumption which is so erroneously termed overproduction; the more contracted the medium of exchange, the more easily is Labor robbed of the result of its work.

What is the chief cause of all the misery so patiently endured by those who produce all wealth? It is, without the shadow of a doubt, our unnatural currency laws.

The census of 1890 shows the public and private debts of the United States to be \$45,000,000,000; the gold of the world, bullion and coin, amounts to \$5,000,000,000 (some say \$7,000,000,000) only. Every undertaking to pay in gold, and all mortgages and all interest is so required, is therefore promising an impossibility, a thing which no law of man or devil can compel.

Athens, Carthage, Rome, etc., are plain and unmistakable warnings to us. They did not destroy usury, and therefore usury destroyed them, and it will any nation; for metals do not breed, and metal money of any kind, even lead or tin, enables the monopolizer to command interest.

It is estimated that England, through the gold standard, is robbing America of \$1,500,000 per diem. This awful drain is all taken from Labor; it cannot be otherwise, as they produce all wealth.

Professor Price defines money thus: "Money is a tool of exchange and nothing more; it is not a measure of value, nor a standard of value, nor a representative of property; it transfers property from one party to another as a wagon hauls goods from one place to another."

Bankers say that gold is to the body politic as blood is to the human body. This analogy followed out will explain the present cause of the fearful suffering that Labor is now experiencing. There is a congestion of \$600,000,000 in New York banks waiting for usurious investments, security being required that is worth two or three times the amount

loaned. Imagine a man with that proportion of his blood congested in his head and refusing the use of it to his leg except on the mortgage of the rest of the body for the loan.

Mathematics are reduced to a scientific system; therefore we are in the mathematical millennium. Mechanics are also a scientific system, so we have the mechanical millennium with us, and this includes the transportation of matter and sound—in fact, we have advanced in every other department of life including Christian Science, but in the matter of currency we have been retrograding as rapidly as every other branch of economics has been progressing toward Truth. Science is Truth. Truth has been reached in these various departments; but as all restrictions that interfere with the freedom of production, exchange, and transportation are wrongs to those who produce, we cannot yet have entered the social or universal millennium; to effect this all restrictions must be removed that block the free use of the means of production, exchange, and transportation. The only obstacle in the way is the medium of exchange; instead of the present wicked gold standard we must have a scientific medium of exchange that will ensure equity, and consequently freedom from usury.

History proves the benefits derived from the use of irredeemable paper money. Venice for 600 years controlled the commerce of the world on this basis.

Sir Archibald Allison, in his history of Europe, says: "The suspension of specie payment by the Bank of England in 1797 led to the use of an enormous amount of irredeemable paper money."

"The result was magical.

"It terminated in a blaze of glory and a flood of prosperity which has never before or since the beginning of the world descended on any nation.

"Prosperity, universal and unheard of, pervaded every department of the empire. Agriculture,

manufactures, and commerce increased in unparalleled ratio.

"The landed proprietors were in affluence.

"Wealth to an unheard of extent was created among the farmers.

"Our exports, imports and tonnage more than doubled, and the condition of the people was one of extraordinary prosperity.

"From 1797 to 1819 no financial embarrassment of any moment was experienced, and in vain Napoleon waited for the stoppage of England's financial resources.

"*But the resumption of specie payments in 1819—the change of the financial system from legal tender paper to metal money—was ruinous to all the industries of England.*

"The distress became insufferable, and in Manchester 60,000 men, women and children assembled, demanding blood or bread; and many of the people were killed and many wounded by the British troops."

Our own Jefferson saw the inevitable when he said, "Banks are more dangerous to the liberties of the people than standing armies."

Proofs of the iniquities of the metal medium of exchange could be produced in such profusion as to fill volumes, and would prove to demonstration that it is only unnatural currency laws that keeps land out of use and those anxious for work in enforced idleness—a burden to themselves and the prime factor which reduces the wages of those who find employment.

If our surplus labor is to be employed we must first have a righteous tool of exchange, such as Venice prospered under for 600 years, and such as England enjoyed with so much advantage to all classes in the period between 1797 and 1819.

How can this all-important end be gained? First, let us consider if there is the slightest hope of ob-

taining any such simple, just measure from the government.

Our noble ancestors were far-seeing when, on the 23d of December, 1793, they enacted that, "Any person holding any office or stock in any institution in the nature of a bank for issuing or discounting bills or notes payable to bearer or order cannot be a member of the House while he owns such office or stock." This resolution was signed by the President, George Washington.

Three-fourths of the seats in Congress are therefore illegally filled to-day by bank officials and bank shareholders, and for at least thirty years all laws passed by the Senate have been unconstitutional, even waiving the legality of election, inasmuch as they all tend towards special privileges to the few at the expense of the many who labor.

James M. Eckels, one of our Finance Ministers, speaking at the annual meeting of the Association of American Bankers held in Detroit August 18th, 1897, said: "The currency problem is, taking it all in all, the most momentous with which the American statesman has to do. It is one neither of politics nor political preferment. It is, as bankers, more than all others, ought to realize, one of business self-preservation, and as such should command at the hands of those who are sworn to guard and preserve the people's rights, a statesmanship and patriotism commensurate with the magnitude of the interests involved. It presents in its circulation feature the singular spectacle of nine different kinds of currency, all except two of which are directly or indirectly dependent upon the credit of the United States."

For a mixture of truth, error and superstition, how beautifully this coincides with our Sunday ministers—true inasmuch as the currency is the most momentous problem, false as being neither of politics or political preferment, bearing in mind

that the true definition of "politics" is serving God in such a way that the devil does not object to the service. True, it is, as bankers more than all others ought to realize one of business self-preservation; false in allowing it to be thought he referred to the business of the country, when of course he referred to the business of the Association of American Bankers, whom he was addressing, and whose business it is solely to skin the rest of the people. True, it should command at the hands of those who are sworn to guard and preserve the people's rights a statesmanship and patriotism commensurate with the magnitude of the interests involved. This minister, like other ministers, was studiously using words to conceal his knowledge of facts, to gloss over the vilest iniquities ever practiced on any nation.

Eckels knows that those who rule America are monopolists, who gain place and power by fraud, and whose motto is "The people be damned," whose consciences are seared with the red-hot iron of greed and deception, and whose oaths of office are far worse than valueless. There is not a true statesman in office to-day; each and all are in office for plunder.

Our finance minister did not explain that credit necessitates a creditor, and a creditor means some one in bonds; or to proclaim the fact that America is too young and too rich to be in bondage to any one. He wickedly and of set purpose failed to elucidate that if seven kinds of our currency depend on the credit of Uncle Sam, or, more correctly, on Uncle being a debtor, and as two forms of currency are not so dependent, that we need only one kind of currency, and that one not to involve bondage. He could hardly be expected to go so far, when he is now engaged scheming to issue more bonds with which to further afflict Labor, who has to pay all the bond dealer's profit and the interest.

Proofs of the iniquities by which our elections are conducted and government officials boodled into office would also fill many volumes, and would prove to demonstration that Labor is never considered except to deprive him of his productions; he is never represented in the true light, that of being the only class really necessary for the progress of any nation.

Seeing, therefore, that the present currency laws are the only reason why we have any surplus Labor, —*what an absurd expression to use in a cobble-paved city*, or in a State that would welcome as many millions as we now have thousands, and with a “righteous tool of exchange” enable them to live in comfort and the pursuit of happiness; seeing this, and that we cannot expect our government to assist our surplus Labor to employ themselves for themselves, it remains for Labor to employ themselves and see to it that there shall be no surplus products on which parasites grow fat—and this can be brought about only by producers deciding to use their own “righteous tool of exchange” by means of Labor checks.

The Labor Exchange Association has now about 260 branches; nearly every State in the Union has organizations at work. California heads the list with over sixty branches. The Association proposes an enormous amount of irredeemable paper money, so enormous as to be limited only by the amount of wealth they produce; and just as soon as Labor generally adopts this new “righteous tool of exchange” America’s blaze of glory will outshine that of England in 1797 a thousand-fold. And in addition to all this, it would restore the inestimable blessing of Freedom to Labor.

The National Labor Exchange was incorporated under the laws of Missouri by order of the circuit court for Pettis county, of that State, on the 1st of March, 1890, by G. B. De Bernardi, Independence, Missouri.

It is an organization of producers and others interested in the advancement of the people. Any person, without regard to sex, age, race or religion, can become a member upon taking the pledge and paying the membership fee of one dollar, which covers all the charge for a life membership, there being no assessments or other dues.

The pledge is as follows:

I..... of the age of..... years,sex, and by occupation now residing at....., County of.....and State of.....in consideration of the rights, privileges, benefits and protection conferred upon me as a member of the Labor Exchange Association, and to the end that the property of the said Association, upon which the safety of said benefit is based, may not be sacrificed at reduced value, by forced liquidation in legal tender money, hereby promise and agree that for any article or articles of merchandise and moneys that I may deposit in the keeping of, labor and services, that I may perform for, or for any certificate of deposit that I may hold on said Labor Exchange, I will accept as sufficient compensation thereof, merchandise, property, labor, or services of equal value, and relinquish any rights and liens which may have resulted in my favor and against the property of the Association by reason of said deposits, labor or services.

In testimony thereof, I have hereunto signed my name in the presence of the following witnesses, this..... day of....., 189....

.....[Seal.]

....., Witness.

....., Witness.

[No.... of Branch No.....]

The purpose of the organization is to demonetize all metals as coin, and monetize all the products of Labor—it being obviously unjust to allow a man to get into debt for anything under the sun, but to be able to get out of debt only by means of one (or two) metals which are extremely difficult for him to obtain.

The Labor checks put into circulation are perfectly safe, because they are not issued except for actual wealth placed in the hands of the Exchange, or for work performed. Before the goods go out from the Exchanges, paper representing the amount to be withdrawn has to be handed in.

Production and consumption will by this system be vastly increased; the paper check money cannot be cornered; they will be very unlikely to draw interest, because every one will be the possessor of all he produces—the average amount of \$10 a day.

It will encourage home production as no other method could possibly accomplish; it will at once sound the death knell to monopoly, and render strikes unnecessary; show the absurdity of one man, or one thousand men, coercing one man or a thousand men to work one hour or twenty-four hours a day; it will prevent the present very small minority of FIVE governing 70,000,000; it will render starvation optional instead of compulsory, as at present; it will allow a choice of congenial occupations, and therefore secure the best results; square men would be suited with square holes, and the round men would find fitting round holes; it would encourage brotherly love, and thus relegate to the past, the present civilization of each man having his hand against some other man's throat, or, on his bread and butter.

It will render surplus products impossible, and surplus labor will be an unknown quantity.



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